

METHOD OF PROVIDING AN ADORNED ARTICLE
AND AN ADORNED ARTICLE MADE USING THE METHOD

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

5 This invention relates to portable articles and, more particularly, to a method of fixedly placing an adornment on an article in a manner that facilitates its removal. The invention is also directed to an adorned article made using the method.

BACKGROUND ART

10 Many articles, in many different fields, are enhanced by attaching adornment thereto. It is common to use a basic article configuration and to selectively attach different adornment thereon to change the appearance thereof. This concept is particularly prevalent in the apparel industry.

15 One example of apparel, to which a wide range of adornment is attached, is headwear, such as baseball-style caps. The conventional baseball-style cap has a crown with a projecting brim/bill. Adornment, such as in the form of a team name or logo, is commonly attached to the front wall of the crown. This adornment may have many different forms. The adornment may be embroidered

directly on a layer or layers defining the crown front wall. Alternatively, the adornment may be formed by a silk screening process or through the use of an impressionable label. Most commonly, the adornment is in the form of a discrete patch with the desired information thereon that may take virtually any form, i.e. words, logos, ornamentation, depictions of animate or inanimate objects, etc.

These patches are capable of being fixedly attached to the crown of the headwear piece in a number of different manners. In one form, an adhesive layer is provided on the back of the patch. By elevating the temperature of the adhesive layer, with the patch urged against the crown surface under pressure, the patch can be permanently bonded to the crown surface.

In another form, the patch is maintained in place by stitching. Typically, the stitching will extend continuously around the perimeter of the patch. In a lockstitch sewing operation, the stitching can be formed so that severance of the thread at any one location does not release adjacent stitches.

This type of adorned headwear is commonly offered as a souvenir at competitions, such as sporting events. One common practice in this industry has been to customize headwear by recognizing the victorious individual or team in a competition with an appropriate designation on the headwear. Fans and observers of such events have become accustomed to having such customized headwear available, either immediately after the conclusion of the event, or soon

thereafter . Purveyors of headwear try to make such customized headwear available while the event is fresh in people's minds and there is enthusiasm that may lead to the purchase of one or more souvenir pieces of headwear, and other related paraphernalia.

5 At times, the volume demand for such headwear is extremely high. In large cities, hundreds of thousands of potentially rabid fans, caught up in the frenzy of a local championship, may be anxious to purchase a commemorative souvenir. To capitalize on the partisan energy that exists within a relatively short frame after such an event, purveyors of such souvenirs generally seek to have high volumes 10 of the customized headwear available at the earliest possible moment after a victor is determined. Early exposure may translate into substantially greater sales than those of competitors.

This rush to market has lead to a number of different manufacturing and marketing practices. One practice is to produce large volumes of headwear 15 identifying each of the participants as the victor. From a marketing standpoint, this is the most effective approach in that the customized headwear can be made available to fans exiting a stadium or arena immediately after the event which crowns the victor.

The obvious drawback with this marketing technique is that the headwear 20 recognizing the losing participant as victor is unuseable. The owner of this stock

is left with the options of either disposing of the same, or trying to alter it so that the basic headwear piece and/or the attached adornments can be re-used.

Generally, it is not practical to remove patches that have been attached using a heat activated adhesive. The patch and/or the headwear piece may be destroyed in an attempt to effect removal.

Patches that are applied using a continuous lock stitch sewing method are likewise relatively permanently attached. If removal is desired, each of potentially numerous stitches must be individually severed as by a tool with a sharpened cutting edge. This may be sufficiently time consuming that it is not cost effective to salvage either the headwear piece or the adornment.

As a result, historically purveyors of headwear have routinely disposed of headwear with adornment that is inaccurate or inappropriate. Losses can be very significant, so as to seriously adversely affect profits in a particular market.

This problem has lead some to produce lower end headwear with adornment that is defined by other than separately applied patches. However, those in the industry with reputations for high quality headwear do not generally wish to participate in this alternative manufacturing process. Additionally, those seeking a souvenir commemorating a rare event may wish to purchase a high quality headwear piece that will serve as a lifelong remembrance of the particular event.

The industry continues to seek out ways to provide high quality, commemorative headwear on an expedited basis without the inconvenience and potentially severe economic consequences, discussed above.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

5 In one form, the invention is directed to a method of providing an article to meet an actual or anticipated demand for the article. The method includes the steps of: providing an article having an exposed surface defined by at least one substrate layer; providing a first adornment layer; tack stitching the first adornment layer fixedly to the at least one substrate layer with thread at at least first and second discrete locations on the first adornment layer so that the article has a first appearance; stocking the article with the first appearance to meet an actual or anticipated demand for the article having the first appearance; changing the appearance of the article from the first appearance to a second appearance; and making the article with the second appearance available to meet an actual or anticipated demand for the article. The step of changing the appearance of the article from the first appearance involves the steps of: releasing the tack stitching at the at least first and second discrete locations to allow the first adornment layer to be separated from the article; separating the first adornment layer from the

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article; providing a second adornment layer; and attaching the second adornment layer fixedly to the article.

The step of attaching a second adornment layer fixedly to the article may involve tack stitching the second adornment layer fixedly to the at least one substrate layer at at least third and fourth discrete locations on the second adornment layer so that the article has a second appearance.

The step of providing an article may involve providing an article that is an article of clothing, such as a headwear piece.

In one form, the step of releasing the tack stitching may involve cutting the thread defining the tack stitching at the at least first and second discrete locations.

In one form, the step of providing a first adornment layer involves providing a first adornment layer with an identification of a first sports team and the step of providing a second adornment layer involves providing a second adornment layer with an identification of a second sports team that competes with the first sports team.

The step of tack stitching the first adornment layer may involve tack stitching the first adornment layer at a first mounting location on the article, and the step of attaching a second adornment layer may involve attaching the second adornment layer at the first mounting location.

The step of tack stitching the first adornment layer may involve tack stitching the first adornment layer at a first mounting location on the article, with the step of attaching the second adornment layer involving attaching the second adornment layer at a second mounting location.

5 The steps of providing first and second adornment layers may involve providing first and second adornment layers that at least one of a) are different in shape and b) have different information thereon.

The step of providing an article may involve providing an article that is a headwear piece having a crown and a brim/brill projecting from the crown.

10 The step of attaching a second adornment layer fixedly to the article may involve at least one of a) stitching the second adornment layer to the article and b) adhesively bonding the second adornment layer to the article.

15 The method may further include the step of displaying the article with the second appearance for sale at a first site. The step of changing the appearance of the article may involve the step of attaching the second adornment layer fixedly to the article at the first site.

In one form, the step of providing a first adornment layer involves providing a first adornment layer with information thereon related to a first participant in a competition involving the first participant and a second participant. The step of

providing a second adornment layer may involve providing a second adornment layer with information related to the second participant.

The step of providing a first adornment layer may involve providing a first adornment layer with a logo thereon identifying a first participant in a competition involving the first participant and a second participant. The step of providing the second adornment layer may involve providing a second adornment layer with a logo thereon identifying the second participant.

The invention is further directed to the combination of a) an article of clothing having an exposed surface defined by at least one substrate layer, b) a first adornment layer fixedly attached to the at least one substrate layer with thread tack stitched at at least first and second discrete locations on the first adornment layer, and c) a second adornment layer that can be interchangeably fixedly attached to the at least one substrate layer in place of the first adornment layer. The thread can be severed to release the first adornment layer to allow substitution therefor by the second adornment layer.

In one form, the article is a headwear piece.

The headwear piece may have a crown and a brim/bill projecting away from the crown.

In one form, the first adornment layer has first information thereon relating to a first participant in a competition involving the first participant and a second

participant, and the second adornment layer has second information thereon relating to the second participant.

In one form, the first information includes a first logo, with the second information including a second logo.

5 The first adornment layer may be attached to the crown.

The invention is also directed to a headwear piece having a crown having an exposed surface defined by at least one substrate layer and an adornment layer fixedly attached to the at least one substrate layer with thread tack stitched at at least first and second discrete locations on the adornment layer to maintain 10 the adornment layer on the crown.

A brim/bill may project away from the crown.

In one form, the adornment layer is maintained on the crown substantially entirely by the thread tack stitched at the at least first and second discrete locations so that by severing the thread, the adornment layer can be separated 15 from the crown without damaging the crown.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

Fig. 1 is a schematic representation of a kit, according to the present invention, including an article and first and second adornment layers which are selectively interchangeably attachable to the article;

Fig. 2 is a front elevation view of the article in Fig. 1, in the form of a headwear piece, with the first adornment layer attached thereto and showing the second adornment layer separated from the headwear piece;

Fig. 3 is a plan view of the headwear piece in Fig. 2;

5 Fig. 4 is an enlarged, fragmentary, cross-sectional view of a portion of the headwear piece in Figs. 2 and 3, taken along line 4-4 of Fig. 2, and showing tack stitching utilized to maintain the first adornment layer on the headwear piece;

10 Fig. 5 is a fragmentary, elevation view of another form of adornment layer tack stitched through part of the headwear piece in Figs. 2 and 3 and showing a cutting blade in a position preparatory to severing thread on one of the tack stitches;

Fig. 6 is an enlarged view as in Fig. 5 showing the cutting blade after it has fully severed thread in the tack stitches at a tack stitching location;

15 Fig. 7 is a view as in Fig. 2 and showing first and second adornment layers interchangeably mountable on a headwear piece and shown separated from the headwear piece and with two separate participants in an event;

Fig. 8 is a flow diagram showing the steps in the method of providing an article to meet an actual or anticipated demand for the article, according to the present invention;

Fig. 9 is a schematic representation of attaching structure through which the second adornment layer is attached to an article;

Fig. 10 is an elevation view of a modified form of headwear piece with which the present invention can be practiced; and

5 Fig. 11 is a perspective view of a further modified form of headwear piece with which the present invention can be practiced.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

Referring initially to Fig. 1, one form of the invention is shown at 10 in a form of a kit, with an article 12 and first and second separate adornment layers 14, 10 16, respectively. The article 12 can be virtually any type of consumer article, preferably that is portable in nature. For purposes of illustration, the article 12 will be described as any article having at least one substrate layer 18 which can be sewn therethrough using conventional stitching equipment and techniques. Particularly suitable for practice of the present invention are apparel items, such 15 as headwear, shirts, pants, socks, dresses, coats, purses, etc.

According to the invention, the first and second adornment layers 14, 16 can be provided in kit form in conjunction with the article 12 to be interchangeably attached thereto to selectively create two different appearances for the article 12. The first and second adornment layers 14, 16 may be different or the same. In the

latter case, worn or faded information on the first adornment layer 14 can be replaced with like ornamentation on the second adornment layer 16 to provide an improved appearance.

In Figs. 2 and 3, the article 12 is shown in the form of a headwear piece.

5 The headwear piece 12 is in the form of a baseball-style cap including a crown 20 with a brim/bill 22 projecting forwardly from the crown 20. The crown 20 is defined by a plurality of triangular, fabric gores 24, sewn edge-to-edge through lines of stitching 26 to produce a continuous cup-shaped receptacle 28 for the head of a wearer. The crown 20 has an exposed external surface 30 defined by the gores
10 24. The crown 20 may actually be defined by an additional layer or layers sewn on the underside thereof, partially or fully over the inside surface, as to define a backing structure, a sweatband, etc.

The brim/bill 22 has an exposed upwardly facing surface 32 and a downwardly facing surface 34, which surfaces may be defined by the same or
15 separate layers 36, 38, shown. For purposes of illustration, the crown 20 will be described as being made from a single layer 40.

It should be understood that while fabric is preferred for constructing the layers 36, 38, 40, virtually any material that can be sewn through, using known manual or automated techniques, is contemplated by the invention.

The layer 40 defines a substrate for the application of the first adornment layer 14 . The first adornment layer 14 has "information" thereon which may take virtually any shape and have any color or combination of colors. The information may be in the form of a decoration, an identification of a team or individual participating in a competition, a logo, the depiction of an object or scene, etc. The first adornment layer 14 is fixedly attached to the crown layer 40 by tack stitches 42, in this case at two discrete locations on the first adornment layer 14, as seen also in Fig. 4. Tack stitching is a conventional process whereby thread 44 is directed through superposed layers to provide one or more adjacent stitches 46 which cinch the connection of the layers. Tack stitches, which can be performed by a conventional tack stitching machine 48, are commonly locally grouped in numbers, depending upon the required tenacity of the connection, and can be simply formed substantially instantaneously by the tack stitching machine 48 in a single step process. In this embodiment, three tack stitches 46 are shown at each tack stitch location.

It is contemplated that the first adornment layer 14 could be attached anywhere on the crown 20. Two alternative, exemplary locations on the crown 20 for the first adornment layer 14 are shown in Fig. 3. At each location, the tack stitching 42 is utilized. The tack stitching 42 is preferably provided at at least two discrete spaced locations to positively secure the first adornment layer 14 to the

substrate layer 40. The shape and size of the first adornment layer 14 are not critical to the present invention and may vary significantly. The number of tack stitching locations and the number of tack stitches 46 used at each location will be dictated by the shape and size of the first adornment layer 14 and the desired strength of connection of the adornment layer 14. It is desirable that the number of tack stitches 46 utilized, the number of locations at which the tack stitches 46 are formed, and the precise placement of the tack stitches 46 be coordinated so that the first adornment layer 14 is positively secured to the headwear piece 12 and gives a neat, finished appearance. As shown in Figs. 2 and 3, the first 5
adornment layer 14 can be similarly attached to the substrate layers 36, 38 on the
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brim/bill 22 utilizing this same technique.

By utilizing tack stitching, the first adornment layer 14 lends itself to being removed essentially without damaging either the first adornment layer 14 or the substrate layers 36, 38, 40. The removal procedure is depicted in Figs. 5 and 6, 15
each of which shows a modified form of first adornment layer 14' attached to one of the substrate layers 36, 38, 40 using the tack stitching 42. A cutting blade 50 with a pointed tip 52 and a sharpened edge 54 is moved in the direction of the arrow 56 to cause the tip 52 to move through loops 58 (see also Fig. 4) formed against the surface 30, 32 in the tack stitching process. The loops 58 can be 20
similarly cut on either the inside or outside of the layer 40, or at the top or bottom

of the brim/bill 22. By directing the cutting blade 50 in the direction of the arrow 56, the blade 52 wedges into the loops 58 and, one by one, severs the loops 58 to allow the thread 44 to be separated from the first adornment layer 14' and the substrate layers 36, 38, 40. This process can be repeated at each location at
5 which there is tack stitching. At the completion of this process, the first adornment layer 14' can be cleanly separated from the substrate layers 36, 38, 40 without damaging the substrate layers 35, 38, 40. This permits the application of the second adornment layer 16, shown in Fig. 2, which can be applied at the location from which the first adornment layer 14 is removed, or elsewhere on either the
10 crown 20 or brim/bill 22.

If information on the first and second adornment layers 14, 16 is the same, the appearance of the headwear piece 12 can be changed by placing the second adornment layer 16 at a location that is different than that from which the first adornment layer 14 was removed. If the first and second adornment layers 14, 16
15 are different in appearance, by reason of either their shape, color, the nature of the information, etc., a different appearance is realized by substituting the second adornment layer 16 for the first adornment layer 14 at either the same location from which the first adornment 14 was removed, or at a second location. Even if the first and second adornment layers 14, 16 have the same appearance, placing
20 the second adornment layer 16 at the same location from which the first

adornment layer 14 was removed may still produce a different appearance in the event that, for example, the first adornment layer 14 has a faded or worn appearance, or is otherwise damaged or stained.

One particularly useful application for the inventive concept is demonstrated using the headwear piece 12, and first and second adornment layers 14", 16", as shown in Fig. 7. In this particular embodiment, the headwear piece 12 has the same configuration as shown in Figs. 1 and 2. The first adornment layer 14", which may be any size, shape or color, has some information that identifies or relates to one of two participants, in this case participant A in a competitive event, such as a sports event, involving additionally participant B. The second adornment layer 16" likewise has any shape, size or color and has information related to participant B. The information related to the participants may be the actual naming of the participants, a logo associated with the participants, such as a team logo, etc. The components 12, 14", 16" can be sold as a kit which permits a unique manufacturing/marketing method, as depicted in flow diagram form in Fig. 8.

In the initial step, the first and second adornment layers 14", 16" and an article, in this case a headwear piece 12, are provided as shown at block 64. As shown at block 66, the first adornment layer 14" is fixedly attached to the headwear piece 12 and stocked, as shown at block 68.

The article with this appearance is generally a potential draw to a follower of participant A, which may be a home town sports team. In one scenario, the headwear piece 12 can be adorned with the first adornment layer 14", with participant A involved in a "series", which is a common format for baseball playoffs and the ultimate championship competition. One wishing to sell the headwear 12 might, relying on participant A being a favorite in the event, manufacture a significant quantity of the headwear piece 12 with the first adornment layer 14" tack stitched thereto, as previously described.

At the conclusion of the event, the answer as to whether first adornment layer 14" is appropriate, i.e. whether participant A is victorious, is determined, as indicated at block 69. If the answer is "yes", the headwear piece 12 with the first adornment layer thereon is displayed and offered for sale, as seen at block 70.

In the event that participant A is not the successful participant in the particular event, and the response to the question of whether the first adornment layer 14" is appropriate is "no", the first adornment layer 14" is removed from the headwear piece 12, as shown in block 71. The thread 44 at the various tack stitch locations can be cut to separate the first adornment layer 14" from the headwear piece 12.

Thereafter, the second adornment layer 16" can be fixedly attached to the headwear piece 12, as indicated at block 72. The attachment process may involve

tack stitching or utilize any other means known to those skilled in this art. As shown in Fig. 9, the second adornment layer 16, 16" can be attached to the article 12 utilizing any attaching structure, as shown generically at 76. For example, the attaching structure may be a combination of an adhesive and stitching. The stitching may be a chain stitching or other type of stitching, i.e. lock stitching, which is more permanent in nature, etc.

Referring again to Fig. 8, as shown at block 78, the headwear piece 12 with the second adornment layer 16" attached is made available to consumers to meet actual or anticipated demand therefor.

Given the nature of tack stitching, it is possible for all of the steps shown in Fig. 8 to be carried out at a single site, even at the venue at which the event has taken place involving the participants A and B. For example, the steps can be carried out in a souvenir trailer typically seen outside of stadiums.

The inventive concept can be utilized with other types of headwear, with exemplary alternative forms shown respectively at 12' and 12" in Figs. 10 and 11.

In Fig. 10, the headwear piece has a crown 20', similar to the crown 20, previously described, but without any corresponding brim/bill 22.

In Fig. 11, the headwear piece 12" is shown in the form of a visor with a crown 20" and brim/bill 22' corresponding to the brim/bill 22. The headwear piece

12" has a crown opening 80 through which a user's head can project with the crown 20" embracing the wearer's head.

In another variation, a supplemental holding means might be utilized in conjunction with the tack stitched thread to maintain adornment layers on a substrate layer. For example, an adhesive might be used which releases to allow separation of an adornment layer without causing damage to an underlying substrate layer. Other supplemental means that allow separation of an adornment layer, without inflicting damage to an underlying substrate layer, are likewise contemplated.

The foregoing disclosure of specific embodiments is intended to be illustrative of the broad concepts comprehended by the invention.